



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

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Season to treat invasive Spartina starts in June

OLYMPIA – The [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) will begin this year's treatment season for Spartina on June 1 with the treatments continuing through November.

Survey and eradication efforts of the aggressive, noxious weed will take place in multiple areas, including Grays Harbor, Hood Canal, Willapa Bay, Puget Sound, the north and west sides of the Olympic Peninsula and at the mouth of the Columbia River.

Spartina, commonly known as cordgrass, can disrupt the ecosystems of native saltwater estuaries. If left unchecked, Spartina outcompetes native vegetation and converts ecologically healthy mudflats into solid Spartina meadows. The invasive species destroys important migratory shorebird and waterfowl habitat, increases the threat of flooding, and negatively impacts the state's shellfish industry.

In 2017, Spartina was successfully eradicated from nine sites, bringing the total number of previously infested sites now declared eradicated to 57, or 32% of all the Spartina sites tracked by WSDA.

In the past 15 years, the Spartina eradication effort has reduce the state's infestation from a high of more than 9,000 total acres in 2003 to about four total acres this year.

Since 1995, WSDA has served as the lead state agency for [Spartina eradication](#), facilitating the cooperation of local, state, federal and tribal governments; universities; interested groups; and private landowners. These cooperators last year located and treated more than 18,000 individual Spartina plants.

This year, project partners expect to survey more than 80,000 acres of saltwater estuaries and 1,000 miles of shoreline in 12 counties. WSDA and its partners will dig out small infestations by hand and treat larger sites with herbicides.

"Our goal is to eradicate Washington's remaining Spartina infestations and prevent re-infestation of previously cleared areas," Jim Marra, manager of WSDA's Pest Program, said. "This effort has protected and restored many of the state's most productive shoreline habitats. This summer the cooperators continue the challenging work of finding and removing the thousands of Spartina plants remaining in the Puget Sound and along Washington's coast."

Visit agr.wa.gov/plantsinsects/weeds/Spartina for progress reports on Spartina control efforts.

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